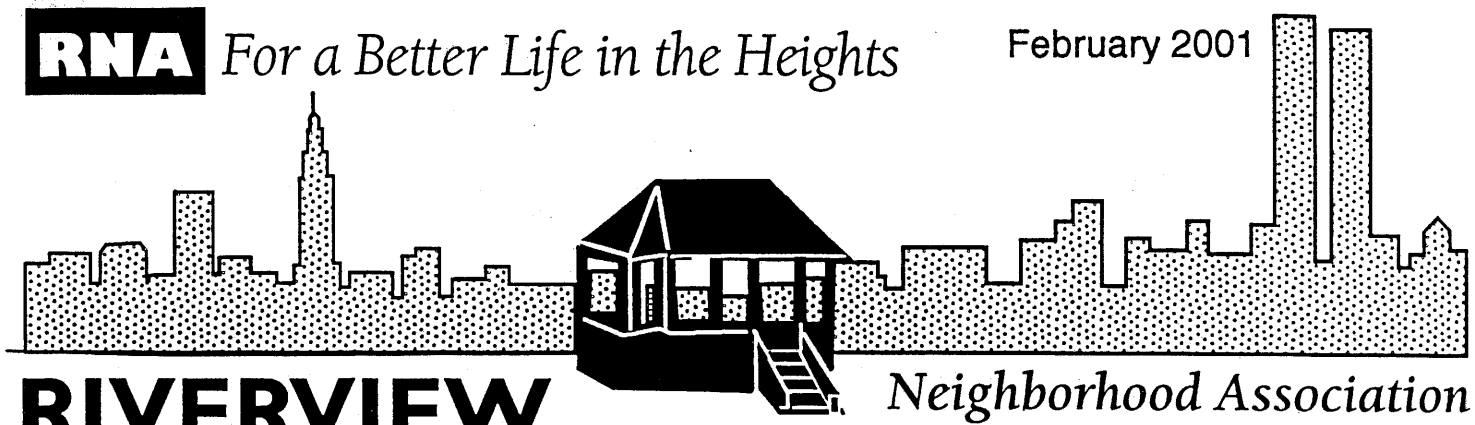
RNA *For a Better Life in the Heights*

February 2001



RIVERVIEW *Neighborhood Association*

232 Ogden Avenue • Jersey City, NJ 07307 • 201 798 0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION or ELECTED OFFICIAL

ANNUAL RNA ELECTIONS

It's time once again to elect the annual executive officers for RNA. The nominations for Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Sgt.-at-Arms for the 2001-2002 term will be opened at the February 13th meeting. The nominations will remain open until the March 13th meeting, at which time they will be closed and the election will take place.

To be eligible to vote, you must be eighteen years old, have paid your annual dues and live or own property within the constitutional boundaries of the RNA, which are Ogden and Palisade Avenues from Cuneo Place to Congress Street.

To run for office, an individual, in addition to the above qualifications, must be a current resident living within the RNA boundaries and an active member .

We ask everyone to participate in this annual neighborhood activity. It is important for all residents to have a voice in decisions made in their own community.

122-124 Ogden Avenue

The medium rise apartment building proposed for the vacant lot at 122-124 Ogden Avenue came before the **Jersey City Board of Adjustment** (JCBA) on January 11th. For the second time (the first being the Board's November16th meeting), the developers requested and were granted an adjournment of their application due to the fact that only five of the full seven member board were in attendance.

Their proposal is to construct a 4-story apartment building with seven two-bedroom plus "den" units with a seven vehicle garage on the first floor. To construct such a building on the two cliff lots, requires that the JCBA grant seven variances from the zoning code, including density, lot coverage, lot width, rear and side setbacks.

RNA is opposed to this project because of the following reasons: 1) the bulk of the building will cause a negative impact on the surrounding area, 2) the newly addopted Master Zoning Plan calls for 1 and 2 family developent in this area, 3) and because the developers circumvented the need for additional parking by removing a closet from a proposed thrid bedroom in each unit and re-labeled it a

(continued on Page 2)

A VICTORY FOR LIBERTY STATE PARK

On January 27th, the citizens of Hudson County spoke loud and clear against a proposal to allow a private developer to build a commercial "aquatic center", or a waterpark, in Liberty State Park. In a public hearing organized by the **State Department of Environmental Protection**, individual citizens, neighborhood and block associations, civic organizations, politicians expresed their opposition to this idea and stressed the need to keep the Park as a "pristine natural open space." A special acknowledgement to the **Friends of Liberty State Park** and the **Liberty State Park Conservancy** for their dedicated efforts to educate and organize the public against this ill-conceived idea.

The following personal statement of RNA member **Dan D'Errico**, seems to represent the sentiments of many of the people present at the public hearing:

I love Jersey City. It is an exciting, crowded, crazy place. One thing that many people may not associate with Hudson County is Nature. But right now we have a beautiful world-class park that exists along the Hudson River, Liberty State Park. It is a rare jewel in this City and in the world. It is a setting of natural peace and quiet, just minutes from our homes. It is a place for outdoor recreation. It is a place to ponder our history. It provides a shelter for our animals. And it is a setting for silent contemplation.

I believe that we should protect this unique setting. Once you build over it, it will never come back. It will be gone forever. It is a spiritual place.

There are already enough recreational opportunities

(continued on Page 4)

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

The Jersey City mayoral race has already begun with the announcements of the following candidates: **Tom DeGise, Gerald McCann, Lou Manzo, Glenn Cunningham, and Robert Cavanaugh**. RNA will invite two mayoral candidates to each of the next monthly meetings of February, March and April to allow our community to hear and question them about their positions on issues of citywide and local concern. February's quests will be **Robert Cavanaugh** and **Glenn Cunningham**.

122-124 Ogden Avenue (continued from page one)

den. The den in question measures 9.5' x 12' and has a window; therefore it meets the code requirements for a bedroom and would easily and with little threat of legal recourse by the zoning enforcement officer, be converted into a bedroom after construction. City Planner Claire Davis has written a formal recommendation to the Board to deny this application for the same reasons.

The proposal has been rescheduled for the Board's **Thursday, February 8th meeting**, which begins at 6:00 PM. At the last two meetings, the Board voted not to require the developers to mail new notices to the adjacent property owners despite the fact that the original legally required notices were mailed over four months ago. The attorney for the applicant, Jon P. Campbell, called the need to re-notice an "unfair burden." The Board has put the onus on RNA to notice the neighborhood about this important project.

RNA is asking all interested individuals to come to this meeting and have your opinion heard.

Steven Carr

ANNUAL SPRING ACTIVITIES

RNA is starting to plan for its **Seventeenth Annual Park Fair and Flea Market**. At our February 13th meeting, a steering committee will be organized. We need volunteers with fresh and new ideas to make this year's event a great success. The activity is a fund raiser for RNA's many activities, including the publication of this newsletter. This all-day event held outdoors in Riverview-Fisk Park is a great way to meet your neighbors and make new friends.

There will be also be a discussion to organize the annual **Spring Clean-up**. In the past, this activity included such projects as the clean-up of empty lots, the planting of shrubs, flowers and trees in our Parks and preparation of the flower and shrub and community gardens. Volunteers that are willing to devote several hours on a Saturday morning and not afraid to get dirty are needed for this project.

PARK TILE PROJECT

Public Works Director Kevin Sluka has given City masons the green light to repair and refinish the surface of the retaining walls along the north-eastern perimeter of Riverview-Fisk Park. Once completed the refurbished wall will be used for the tile project that residents **Sandy Martiny** and **Beverly Ruggia Brown** have been coordinating for the last year. The preparatory work on the walls should be completed by February 28th.

We already have many beautiful tiles painted by the neighborhood children. Adults also had an opportunity to paint tiles at the RNA Holiday Party. Now we are looking for leftover or broken bathroom or kitchen tiles, broken china, etc. for mosaic work that will be included in the design. If you have these suitable materials taking up space in your basement, shed, closet, etc. and would like to donate them to our project, please call **Sandy at 798-4235** to arrange for a pick-up or drop them off at Sandy's house located at 227 Ogden Avenue.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

This year, RNA gave the proceeds of its Toy and Food Drive to the **Saint Lucy's Shelter** and the **Hudson Cradle**. Six bags of groceries, a large frozen turkey and a monetary contribution were donated to the residents of the homeless shelter located on Grove Street by the Holland Tunnel. Hudson Cradle, a group that provides care and support for unwanted babies, was given two large bags of toys and plush animals and a monetary contribution. RNA would like to thank everyone who helped make these less fortunate neighbors enjoy their holidays a little more.

On December 12th, RNA celebrated its annual **Christmas Party**. A large group of members, neighbors and friends attended the festivities and brought various deserts. **Mangia Bene** of Bowers Street, catered the affair with their homemade entrees. Christmas gifts were given out and neighbor Pat Courtney won the big jackpot 50/50. Our local police and several politicians attended, including **Tom DeGise, Arnold Bettinger** and **Gerry McCann**

Christmas Caroling

RNA's annual holiday carolers were out singing again this year - despite the rainy weather. New comers **Lisa and Diana Festa, Celeste Brown Ruggia, Celine Woodson and Erica Weatherly** along with their grownup parents and assorted neighborhood diehards (you know who you are!) strolled along Ogden and Palisade Avenues filling the night with song.

This year, it was decided to practice the songs at a "rehearsal and eggnog party" held at Valerie Woodson's house on the preceding Friday night The veteran caroler Maria Tuzzo started everyone off with a rousing chorus of "We wish you a merry Christmas " The dozen adults and children had no trouble following Maria's lead. The use of printed lyric sheets helped jog the memory of such tunes as Frosty the Snowman and Silent Night. Besides being great fun, the evening provided the chance for newer residents to meet some of the regulars: Valerie, Maria, Vito and Robert.

On Sunday, December 17th, the group met at the gazebo in Riverview-Fisk Park under threatening skies. Traditionally, the carolers meet at the gazebo to plan strategy: which songs to sing, where to sing them and in what order. This year was no exception Valerie Woodson gallantly kept track of our agenda during the evening. After a few warm-up songs, we felt ready enough to begin our trek down Ogden Avenue stopping at homes that had their Christmas lights on. When the inhabitants appeared at the door or window,

we sang our 2 or 3 best songs. We were met house after house with smiles and good cheer. **Pam Shaw** and **Cliff Steinbring** of Palisade Avenue invited us in for much appreciated warming refreshments. Later, just as the threatening skies opened up we made a dash for the home of **Cindy Zuanick** and **Chris Whitlow** and finished the evening with more singing, great conversation and hot cider and cookies. Thanks to everyone who made the evening a great success!

Sandy Martiny and Al Festa

[Group singing does not have to be a once a year activity. Ogden Avenue resident and first time caroler, **James Weatherly** is organizing a local singing group for the fun and joy that vocal harmony can supply. For more information, call James at **418-9834**.]

MEETING MINUTES: January 9, 2001

The meeting was convened at 7:55 PM by Chair Vito Brunetti.

Community Policing:

Deputy Chief Peter Behrens was the first speaker. He announced several encouraging statistics, such as burglaries committed in the Heights during the month of December decreased approximately 50% and were down to 20 from the 90 that had taken place the preceding year. Using Federal funds, he assigned more officers to patrols during the holidays because of the increase of street robberies that occur at this time of year. This resulted in the District making 11 arrests.

Behrens responded to a question about the recent murder of a local grocery owner on Palisade Avenue. The crime occurred in the middle of the night. The Deputy Chief stated that 24 hour businesses unfortunately attracted an undesirable element. He indicated he would discuss with our local Council persons a proposal to limit the numbers of hours a business could operate.

Also present at the meeting were **Lieut. Kiernan, Sgt. Ruby and Officers Rukowski and Winterhalter.**

Neighborhood Improvement District:

NID Manager Ronald Clemente announced that the following local problems were either issued summons or reported to the appropriate City agency:

1) the chronic on-street repairs and double-parking at the Griffith Street Body Shop;

2) inadequate garbage containment at 234 Ogden Avenue;

3) installation of a port-o-john on the roof of 34 Griffith Street; and

4) the intrusive security lights on the exterior of 26-228 Ogden Avenue.

He also confirmed that the Division of Parks and Forestry removed approximately seven decayed trees in Riverview-Fisk Park along Ogden Avenue.

He announced the City's winter programs for snow removal for senior citizens and the pick-up of discarded Christmas trees. He also heard complaints regarding the lack of snow removal in our neighborhood, particularly on Franklin Street between Ogden and Palisade Avenues and the Holland Street bridge. He also promised to contact the MUA and request the cleaning of our sewers at the street intersections. Mr. Clemente can be reached at **547-4974, extension 8015**.

Treasurer's Report: RNA Treasurer **Tim Gilliard**, gave a monthly report of RNA's finances, including the success of our recent fund raiser to help pay the legal fees for the Millennium Towers lawsuit.

Planning & Development Committees:

Vice-Chair **Steven Carr** gave an update on the proposed building for **122-124 Ogden Avenue**. The developers were scheduled to present their variance application at the January 11th meeting of the Board of Adjustment. [At that meeting, the attorney for the developers requested an adjournment because there Board did not have a full quorum of seven members. The next hearing is scheduled for Thursday, February 8th.]

Liberty State Park:

Our main quest speaker was **Sam Pesin, President of Friends of Liberty State Park** (FLSP). He gave an brief introduction about the history of the Park: how 19 years ago, his father Morris Pesin advocated for its creation by rowing in the Hudson River to the Statute of Liberty. He acknowledged how Ted Conrad made a model of the Park to present to the State and in the 1970's, State Green Acres funds were used to create the original park land.

He also recounted how for the last 16 years, the FLSP had to keep a constant vigilance and organize to keep the park a open natural space in our densely populated county. He described how various plans for theme parks or luxury housing were defeated by the public. As late as 1995, there was a proposal for a golf course which was also defeated by the citizenry.

Currently he described his efforts along with the **Liberty State Park Conservancy**, to defeat a proposal made by the Park Development Corporation and Mayor Bret Schundler to allow a private developer to build a water park in the Park. The State Department of Environmental Protection had scheduled a public hearing at the Science Center to gather a consensus for this idea. RNA voted to support the FLSP in their opposition to the water park proposal and in favor of keeping the Park as open and natural space.

The meeting ended at 9:40.

Maria Tuzzo, Secretary

COMMUNITYUPDATES:

Millennium Towers' Lawsuits:

The fight to stop the Millennium Towers project (MT) is now in the New Jersey court system. MT is the controversial twin 40+ story towers project to be built on the Jersey City-Hoboken border, below the Palisade cliffs. Three lawsuits have been filed regarding this project. One filed RNA and the **Coalition for a Better Waterfront (CBW)**, has been consolidated with another one by the **City of Hoboken**. These two suits are attempting to void the zoning amendments which would allow the project to be built. The third lawsuit is to permit a referendum election to proceed in order to repeal a 20 year tax abatement that the City Council passed in favor of this project. (Members of RNA organized and gathered signatures for the referendum petition which was certified by the City Clerk.)

On February 22nd, **Judge Jose Fuentes**, of the Superior Court, ruled that, under the state redevelopment statute, the abatement is prohibited from being placed on a referendum ballot. As this newsletter is going to press, an appeal is being prepared in order to present arguments before the Appellate Division to reverse this decision.

Judge Fuentes, who is also hearing the consolidated suits, has scheduled a summary judgment hearing to decide if the membership of the Jersey City Planning Board was illegally constituted at the time of the MT hearings. If the Judge makes such a ruling, he could void the Board's initial recommendation to the City Council, the Council's approval of the zoning amendments and the Board's subsequent site plan approval and remand the issue for rehearing.

On another front, RNA and CBW held a very successful fund raiser on December 9th to help pay the legal fees of their attorney **Michael Pane**. Attorney **Hugh McCluskey** is representing the City of Hoboken.

176 Sherman Avenue:

On Saturday, January 27th, members of RNA and Heights Hope met with local residents to review the architectural plans to convert the old **A & S Bakery** building into a 19 unit condominium complex. The building located on Sherman Avenue between Bowers and South Streets has been abandoned for approximately 15 years. The out-of-town developers have hired **John Klausz**, a Hoboken architect and **Ira Karasick**, a local land-use attorney, to guide their application through the Board of Adjustment.

The project calls for several variances including use (from industrial to residential), height (an additional story which would create a 66' structure), density (from 8 to 19 residential units) and parking (providing 6 less spaces than required). The consensus of the people present was that the project was too big for the neighborhood and would have a detrimental effect in terms of parking, traffic and density. It was decided to discuss the project with City Planner Claire Davis. Plans were also made to organize the neighborhood in order to educate them about this project. For more information, contact **Mary Mills at 459-0232**.

Palisade Avenue Steering Committee:

In December, the City Council voted to reallocate $250,000.00 of the Palisade Avenue HORP homeowner grant program (totaling $345,000.00) to the Jersey City Museum for its current construction project. Unfortunately, the neighborhood associations who make up the Steering Committee were not adequately notified about this action.

Members of each of the groups, including RNA, Heights Hope and Palisade Avenue Coalition spoke out against the resolution and demanded that at the very least, the City return the funds at a later date in order that they be used in our own community.

SUPPORT RNA'S EFFORT TO FIGHT CITY HALL

RNA is presently involved in several important community projects to protect our quality of life. Along with the Coalition for a Better Waterfront, it has filed a lawsuit against the City of Jersey City to reverse the zoning amendments for the Millennium Towers project. RNA is also involved in the referendum petition effort to repeal the 20 year tax abatement for the Millennium Towers development. It is also part of a community wide coalition to lobby the City to pass a Steep Slope ordinance to protect the Palisade cliffs To win these campaigns, we have had to hire a top flight attorney and several planners. Support our efforts by making a monetary contribution., payable to RNA. All donations are tax-deductible.

Liberty State Park (continued from page one)

at Liberty State Park. You can toss a ball, ride a bike, roller blade or jog along a four-mile loop You can fly a kite, kayak, picnic in the grass, romp in a playground or just take a nap. You can feel the breeze, see the leaves change with the seasons, watch the reeds bend in the wind or look with awe at the pheasants as they light gracefully in the tall grass. And I hope that we can look forward to a trail system soon.

There are already enough recreational opportunities in Liberty State Park. If you feel that there is not enough to do there, then there is something the matter with you, not the park. The first time I drove into the park on that beautiful open approach lined with flags that leads to the world's most famous monument, the Statue of Liberty, I said, "This is magnificent! I can't believe they haven't ruined it!" Let's not ruin it. Let us keep it free and open.

Bulletin Board

Birth Announcement

Congratulations to **Jeff and Suzanne Philips** on the birth of their first child. Mom, the former Anne Hart of Ogden Avenue, gave birth to a 6 lb. 12 oz. daughter, **Ariana Joelle** on January 10th. Young Miss Philips is named after her maternal great-grandmother and her paternal grandfather.

Baby, mom and dad are all doing fine. We wish them health and happiness.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

A neighborhood association requires active participation of its members. Part of that participation is the annual membership dues of **$7.00 per person**. Membership entitles you to twelve issues of our monthly newsletter, and voting privileges, if you live within the RNA boundaries.

Please support your community by paying your dues at the next meeting, or sending a check, payable to RNA, to 232 Ogden Avenue.

The Executive Committee

RNA COOKBOOK

Chewy Oatmeal Cookies

INGREDIENTS:

- 3/4 cup (3/4 stick) of softened butter or shortening
- 1-1/4 firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1-1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 cups quick oats, uncooked
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg or allspice
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup chocolate chips

1) Heat oven to 375 degrees. Grease baking sheets .
2) Combine butter, brown sugar, egg, milk and vanilla in large bowl and beat until well blended.
3) Combine oats, flour, baking soda, salt and spices. Stir in coconut, raisins, walnuts and/ or chocolate.
4) Drop rounded tablespoons of dough 2 inches apart onto baking sheet.
5) Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until lightly browned. cool 2 minutes on baking sheet. Remove cookies to cool completely before eating with a big glass of cold milk. Enjoy!

POLICEBEAT

Residents should contact their **Neighborhood Task Force** (NTF) **Police Officers** if they have a problem, a safety concern or knowledge of criminal activity through the North District's Community Service voice mail at **547-5719** or through the front desk at **547-5350**. When leaving a message, include your name, telephone number, street address, the nature of the problem and the date and time of the message. For emergencies, call **547-5477** or **911**.

In addition, anyone with information about illegal drug use and/or drug dealing, should contact the JCPD **Narcotics Unit** at **547-5391** or beeper at **502-9131**. All calls will be strictly confidential.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

1) **Neighborhood Improvement District**: Call **547-4974** and then dial **Ext. 8015 for NID Mgr. Ronald Clemente** to complain about any quality of life problem or concern on your block.

2) **PARKING AUTHORITY**: To report parking complaints call **653-6969**, and press #9. This number is good till 12 midnight. If there is an emergency, Mr. Carmine Venezia, the PA Director can be reached through his beeper **517-3367**, till midnight during the weekdays and till 5 pm on Saturdays.

3) **PSEG LIGHTING**: To report a non-functioning light in the Park or on any of our streets, call **PSEG** at **330-6572** and leave a message with the exact location and number of the street pole.

Recycle this Newsletter - Pass it on to a friend!

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

Tell us how you feel about the quality of life in your neighborhood. Have your voice heard! Send all articles, comments and/or recipes to 232 Ogden Ave The next deadline is **Friday, February 24**

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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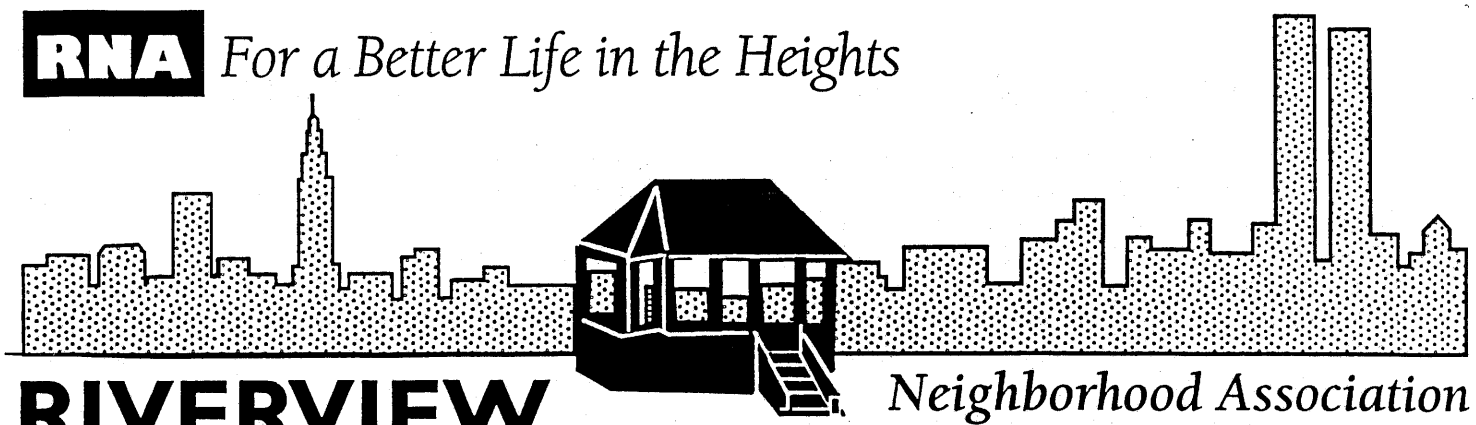
CIRCULATION: Beth D'Errico, Jack Rea, Maria Tuzzo

See You at our next meeting on Tuesday, February 13th at 7:00 PM at the Harbor View Health Care Facility.

RNA *For a Better Life in the Heights*



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SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBORS!

Come to the
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT Hearing
on THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8th at 6:00 PM
City Hall, 280 Grove Street

OPPOSE THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PROPOSED FOR 122-124 Ogden Avenue.

* This project requires Seven Variances, including DENSITY, FLOOR AREA RATIO, LOT AREA, BUILDING COVERAGE, LOT WIDTH, REAR & SIDE SETBACKS.
* The project is too big for this location.
* It will worsen the parking and traffic problems in our neighborhood.
* It will also set a bad precedent for future development in the area.
* It is contrary to the proposed zoning recommendation of the newly adopted Master Plan which calls for 1 & 2 family development.

For more information, call 798-0493.

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MEET THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES AT OUR
MEETING ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH.
THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 7:00 PM SHARP
BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL AGENDA.

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
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Riverview Neighborhood Association

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Steven Carr
Vice-chairperson

Maria Tuzzo
Secretary

Tim Gilliard
Treasurer

Beth D'Errico
Sergeant at Arms

COMING EVENTS:

Board of Adjustment: Thursday, Feb. 8th, 6 PM
Support your neighbors & oppose the project slated for
122-124 Ogden Avenue
(See page one for more information)

RNA MEETING: Tuesday, Feb. 13th, 7:00 PM
LOCATION: HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

* Guest Speakers:
  1. **Mayoral Candidates: Robert Cavanaugh and Glenn Cunningham**
  2. **Tom Hart, Director of the Assisi Animal Center**
* Police NTF Report / NID Updates
* Nominations for RNA EXECUTIVE BOARD